

FESTIVAL CLOSES WITH 'AIDA' SUNG BY SUPERB VOICES

Verdi's Great Master-piece Presented in Concert Form.

CAROLINA WHITE
EASILY THE STAR

Tina Lerner, at Matinee, Receives Ovation, Even Orchestra Joining in Applause—Betty Booker Welcomed Home and Showered With Roses. Whitehill Again.

BY W. DOUGLAS GORDON.

Closing, as it had begun, in the enveloping lustre radiated by brilliant stars of the musical firmament, the twentieth annual music festival of the Wednesday Club came to an end last night before another huge audience.

But, instead of ending, as had the concert of the evening before, with a chorus, the festival concluded with one of the most celestial duets in all the literature of music, that wonderful farewell to the world of Aida and Radaam as they are entombed in Vulcan's Temple, while Amneris stands above bewailing her lover, and the servants of the gods chant to Phtha.

For the work chosen for last night's concert was "Aida," that opus of great Verdi which is commonly considered his crowning work. Written by the famous Italian at the request of the Khedive Ismail, and based upon an incident of ancient Egyptian history, it throbs with the pulse of brooding mystery that Verdi conveyed to us of the essence of Pharaoh's land. Filled with the fury of Oriental rage, ringing with the vigor of conquering men-at-arms, weeping with the sorrow of an enslaved woman, bitter with the hatred of a scorned woman, and burning with the hot passion of Eastern love, the opera is intensely dramatic in almost every line.

Opera Thrilling Always.

And yet, it is also in its melodic beauty, arias, duets and trios discloses lines and blended lines of most exquisite melody, while the choruses, whether they march, pray, or wail, are beautiful to the last degree. So that, even without the accessories of settings and costumes and the aid of dramatic action, the opera is thrilling always, and often startling in its tempestuous splendor.

"Aida" was sung, or a large part of it, was in 1904 by the club, with Homer, Gwyn Miles, Frederick Martin, Anita Rine and a chorus of those name escapes me, who substituted for Jacob Bars when he became "indisposed" after his arrival in Richmond, but these artists gave no such performance of the work as did those of last night.

For the title role, the management of the club selected Carolina White, of the Chicago-Philadelphia Opera Company, and a wise choice it made. Dark and somber, with the ordinary ideal type, as others had most evidently discovered, since she sang the whole opera without a note to guide her and as if thoroughly familiar with the entire score, even with innumerable cuts.

And as she seemed, so she sang—with burning fervor and passion, intense dramatic feeling, and with a prodigious voice more than generous to the audience that she swayed. The voice itself is wonderful, an unusually high type of dramatic soprano, and of apparently boundless range. She sang the high C of the score with the same ease with which the ordinary soprano attains an A, and in full, round, and perfect tones. Probably the most completely satisfactory soprano that the Wednesday Club has ever presented.

All Sang Splendidly.

Paul Altohouse, the American tenor, who has quite recently "arrived," sang Radames with the same unstinting magnificence that Miss White displayed. Although very young, he has a finely developed and true tenor robust, as distinguished from Bonini's lyric voice, and will, in all probability, become one of the singers of the day. The much-declared baritone quality in the lower voice is his to a marked degree, and he uses the whole voice, for the most part, without forcing, though there were occasional exceptions last night.

Clarence Whitehill, the tenor of Amorsgro and Ramfis with the same

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TO PUT COMMISSION OUT OF EXISTENCE

Representative Says Present Operation of Civil Service Is a Farce.

[Special to The Times-Dispatch.]

Washington, D. C., May 6.—The United States Civil Service Commission will soon cease to exist and will become a thing of the past if a bill which is shortly to be introduced by one of the best known Southern members of the House becomes a law. This bill, as explained to-day, will be introduced some time within the next week or ten days, the member proposing the measure stating for good reasons that he preferred to delay action until then.

"The civil service as now operated, if half the reports which have come to me are worthy of belief, is a sham, a humbug and a fraud on the American people," the Congressman who is going to introduce the bill putting it out of existence said to-day. "There was probably a time when the commission did a valuable work, but that time has long since passed. It is now up to Congress to stop the continuance of this farce, and I propose that it shall no longer continue. That is all I care to say regarding the matter now, except that I am fully determined to take such steps that the commission will soon go out of existence."

This action will affect 28,000 men and

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